

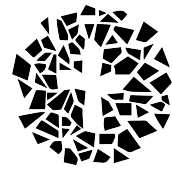
### Community Group Study Guide Week of June 23, 2019

This week, we looked at the first part of 1 Corinthians 9, where Paul illustrates his big idea from chapter 8 with the example of his own life. In chapter 8, Paul taught the mature Christians that they should be motivated by love to lay down their rights for the sake of those who were weaker in the faith. Now Paul shows how he himself had done this very thing when he arrived in Corinth. Specifically, Paul reminds them that, though he was an Apostle and had the right to charge them for his work and ministry to them, he laid down this right and ministered to them free of charge so that there would be no obstacle between them and Christ, other than the Gospel itself. Out of love, and a concern for their eternal souls, he used his "freedom" to serve them and made tremendous sacrifices to generously share the Gospel with them.

Paul was happy to serve the Corinthians, because for him, ministry wasn't a career; it was a calling. Jesus had called him to this work, and he found it a privilege to do so whether or not he was being paid. The generosity that Jesus had shown Paul in saving him, naturally flowed out into his life and ministry. The same love that compelled Paul to present the Gospel "free of charge," however, now also challenges the aging church to grow up. Now that they had been saved into Jesus' church, they should begin to live with the same sacrificial generosity that Paul had shown them. Paul points back to the Old Testament Law (do not muzzle an ox while it's working), to teach them that God wants Pastors to work hard and be generous to the people they have been called to serve, but he's also called his people to be generous to the Pastors and teachers who serve and equip them for their ministry.

Talking about money in church can be a bit awkward, because so many churches have done a poor job of paying their pastors. "Prosperity Gospel" churches falsely teach that Pastors should be rich and live lives of luxury to show how God "blesses those who serve Him." Some "Poverty Gospel" churches falsely teach that a Pastor should be poor, and barely scrape by in order to "stay humble." There are churches that are abused by their pastors, and pastors that are abused by the churches they've been called to serve. Neither of these characterize the love and generosity of the Gospel.

Paul calls churches and Pastors to a more Christ-like way of relating to one another. Pastors must serve as a response to the Gospel and the calling Jesus has given them. This means that like Paul, they are willing to work hard even when they're underpaid or not being paid at all. There are times, especially when a church is first getting started, where this is necessary. Church planting pastors often work second jobs, or travel to raise funds from other churches in order to provide the means to minister to a new church. This necessity, however, is not the ideal. Churches should grow to have a joyful desire to be generous to the pastors and staff who serve them as well. The aim is not to keep the staff rich or poor, but to make sure all their needs are met so that they can focus more time into "equipping the saints for the work of the ministry." This mutual, loving, sacrificial generosity not only reflects the generosity of our God, it also helps new churches get off the ground and continue to grow and flourish in order to reach more and more people, and plant more churches with the Gospel.



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LOVE. JESUS. SIMPLE.

### DISCUSSION GOALS

#### Head

To understand how laying down our rights helps advance the Gospel.

#### Heart

To grow in generosity and deepen our desire to see the Gospel spread in our city.

#### Hands

To identify places where we can "lay down our rights" in order to advance the Gospel or show love to our siblings in Christ.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Membership or Baptism:

Contact

[admin@mosaicboston.com](mailto:admin@mosaicboston.com) to sign up for our next membership class or learn more about baptism.

#### Mosaic JP:

Please keep Mosaic JP and other faithful Boston church plants in your prayers. If your CG would like to serve Mosaic JP together on a Sunday please contact [andy@mosaicboston.com](mailto:andy@mosaicboston.com).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

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### **Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-23**

- How would you summarize Paul's big idea from this text?
- Paul begins by appealing to his calling as an Apostle. Why is it important for a Pastor to see their work as a calling and not a career?
- While Paul willingly laid down his right to be paid for his work, he also shows that according to God's law, this is not the ideal. When might it be helpful for a Pastor to present the Gospel "free of charge" by fundraising or working a second job? At what point does that begin to hinder the amount of ministry that can or should be done?
- Prosperity Gospel churches falsely teach that pastors should be rich to show they are blessed, while poverty Gospel churches teach that pastors should be poor to keep them humble. Why are both a hinderance to the Mission, and what should it look like for a church to pay its Pastors/staff generously but not prodigiously?
- What is the goal in all of this? Both in pastors being willing to lay down their rights, and in the church being called to care for the material needs of their spiritual leaders?
- Paul wants us to apply these principles beyond this one example to every area of life and ministry. What are some other ways we could lay down our rights in order to do more ministry and help more people be "won" to Christ?
- Paul says, "though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them." Why should this perspective of freedom be compelling when we live in a world that tells us it's better to be served and demand our rights?
- How does Jesus own example also compel us to apply this text to our lives, and how does living out this text make us look more like Jesus?